October, 2000 - Perspectives on Post-War Practices – TAD2102

Janine Good Research essay: Question 2.

Is painting dead?

Painting is and will always remain a valid form of human expression - it's good for the soul.

Now that we have entered a new millennium – an era of accelerated technological expansion and commercialism – are the cultural traditions of the past now less valid or obsolete? Should painting be relegated to antique status, a claim made by Minimalist artists Donald Judd and Robert Morris in the mid 60s[1]? Painting has repeatedly been under attack during the twentieth century since the invention of photography; then in the 1960s and 70s with the rising prominence of conceptual and performance based art; and again more recently with advances in digital manipulation of imagery through computer technology. The unfortunate result of much of the questioning of the art tradition made by conceptual and minimalist artists was the undermining rather than promotion of art as a cultural practice. In trying to attack the elitist aspects of the tradition it resulted in becoming *more* elitist so that now (speaking from an Australian experience) art is seen by mainstream society as an over-inflated intellectual pursuit. It may be argued that this has always been the case – that art has always been promoted and sustained in the realm of the elite, the bourgeoisie – but the developments over the past three decades have seen greater emphasis on intellectualising art over an intuitive or emotive response. The priority of 'idea' over everything else has sometimes resulted in the absence of visual stimulation altogether, resulting in artworks that relate to literature rather than visual material.

The questioning of the art tradition was entirely a necessary and valid development in the history of art and criticism and the resultant artworks are an important contribution to expression of contemporary society since mid-century. But the mistake made by these revolutionary artists in questioning the art tradition was their attack on the formal processes of art rather than the institutionalisation of art, resulting in the further fragmentation of the art community. The linear nature of Western art criticism now is problematic in that it is expected that one development in art supersedes its predecessor as the avant-garde replacement rather than building upon or modifying the tradition. All forms of creativity are justified – it does not need to be yet another competitive argument over whose creation is more innovative, of higher value (as in 'high' or 'low' art), what material it is made of (the art/craft debate), or what category the

[1] Robert Morris (1964) – "The trouble with painting is not its inescapable illusionism *per se*. But this inherent illusionism brings with it a non-actual elusiveness or indeterminate allusiveness. The mode has become antique. Specifically what is antique about it is the divisiveness of experience which marks on a flat surface elicit. There are obvious cultural and historical reasons why this happens. For a long while the duality of thing and allusion sustained itself under the force of profuse organizational innovations within the work itself. But it has worn thin and its premises cease to convince…" (Wood, p.190)

'ism' belongs to. Art that has a genuine need to be created seems to contain an unexplainable essence or 'soul', something akin to a deeply personal response that can variously be described as spiritual, religious, emotive, intuitive or even sexual, without being descriptive of these responses. The fact that some artists find paint the best medium to achieve this supports its validity as an artistic practice.

The second half of the twentieth century has been an era of built-in obsolescence where everything, including art, has been given commodity status so that it can be incorporated into the financial context of modern capitalist existence. The acceleration of information and communication around the world has meant a corresponding acceleration of criticism and evaluation of culture. Art is categorised and pigeonholed in almost obsessive proportions – it must fit into the right combination of 'isms' to be recognised as part of contemporary culture. A casualty of this resulting attitude has been 'contemplation', an ingredient lacking in both the evaluation and creation of contemporary Western art. The media (television) has concluded that we need to be constantly stimulated to avoid boredom, but there is a growing unease with the pace of life indicated by an increasing number of people suffering from depression and stress-related conditions. The preference to promote art that shocks and disturbs - being a reflection of modern society - serves to encourage distress rather than confront it or offer any alternatives. Contemplation is a necessary ingredient for easing modern stress and can be obtained through art – by encouraging and allowing the senses the time to respond rather than intellectually evaluating the formal 'isms'. Without contemplation intuition is restricted.

The developments which occurred in painting in the 1940s and 50s under the banner of Abstract Expressionism have since allowed artists greater freedom to respond to their environment both physically and emotively, in as numerous ways as there are individuals. By eliminating subject matter, abstract art allows greater freedom to explore the essential interplay between the formal elements of colour, line, figure and ground required to communicate visually to the viewer. Peter Fischer's introduction to Abstraction, gesture, ecriture summarises:

> …in a representational work our attention is initially absorbed in identifying objects from the real world, and our knowledge and experience of those objects makes it harder for us to perceive them as artifacts. Abstract painting, by eliminating this distraction, sharpens our eye for the potential of those artistic means of expression that lie at the root of all aesthetic experience. (Bois, p.13)

Based on the concept of 'automatism' or 'unconscious gesture', central to the Surrealists in the 1920s, American Abstract Expressionism aimed at promoting an 'ideal' – a space for contemplation. This accounted for the large scale of works from this period, so that the viewer would be engulfed and consumed by the energy of the work. Artists such as Jackson Pollock (1912-1956) recognised the potential for using methods of applying paint to symbolise a pure form of unconscious expression, in a language

that communicated across cultures and social boundaries. Andre Breton (1896-1966) introduced the concept of *ecriture automatique* in 1924 which meant

> '… a psychic automatism that would allow the free association of ideas, words, feelings and abstract forms of expression, entirely liberated from the bonds of norms and reason, and hence, giving free rein to the unconscious mind.' (Bois, p.20).

Other artists to be influenced throughout the century by this concept include Miro, Klee, Picasso, Twombly, Marden and Basquiat.

Pollock took the concept of the Surrealists a step further by dispensing with subject matter and 'traditional compositional structure' (Duro & Greenhalgh, p.33), developing his all-over drip painting method. His method allowed him to distance himself from the work providing less risk of controlling the flow of the unconscious. He became involved in the expression of the mark and the process of making it. Art was no longer descriptive - the artwork became a record of the act of painting – a ritual. 'Line' was no longer perceived as 'outline' and became an expressive element, in Pollock's case, forming a web of drips and splatters across the surface of the canvas. The spontaneous layers of gestural marks create their own imaginary pools of atmosphere.

Fig.1 **Jackson Pollock**, *Lavender Mist Number 1*, 1950, 220 x 303 cm

> '…Pollock no longer depicted objects and situations from his environment but offered direct evidence of the act of painting itself. Semiotically speaking, his painting is concerned with indexical signs, that is to say signs which have a direct physical connection with the event signified (in this case the act of painting)…' (Bois, p.16)

In 1988 and '89 Brice Marden (b.1938) an American painter of a later generation began two series of paintings and drawings called the *Cold Mountain* series and *The Muses*, a project which spanned more than a decade. Marden uses line to create gesture of a different kind but related to that of Pollock. Like Pollock he distances himself from the work to avoid over-control of the marks, but in this case Marden uses a long stick as an implement to apply the paint, creating spontaneous yet sensuous line that he builds up over a period of time into a web of writhing figures. The energy of Marden's line flows upwards like ethereal ribbons of smoke twisting in and upon themselves to form columns of self-contained contemplation with no beginning and no end.

> 'Applying his colours with a stick, Marden filled his canvases with an airy tangle of sliding, swerving, curving lines. These webs didn't resemble Pollock's denser ones so much as bring them to mind for comparison. Marden did not become a Pollock imitator. His implement prevented that … his stick puts him at a distance from the canvas, as Pollock's drips had done.' (Ratcliff, p.304)

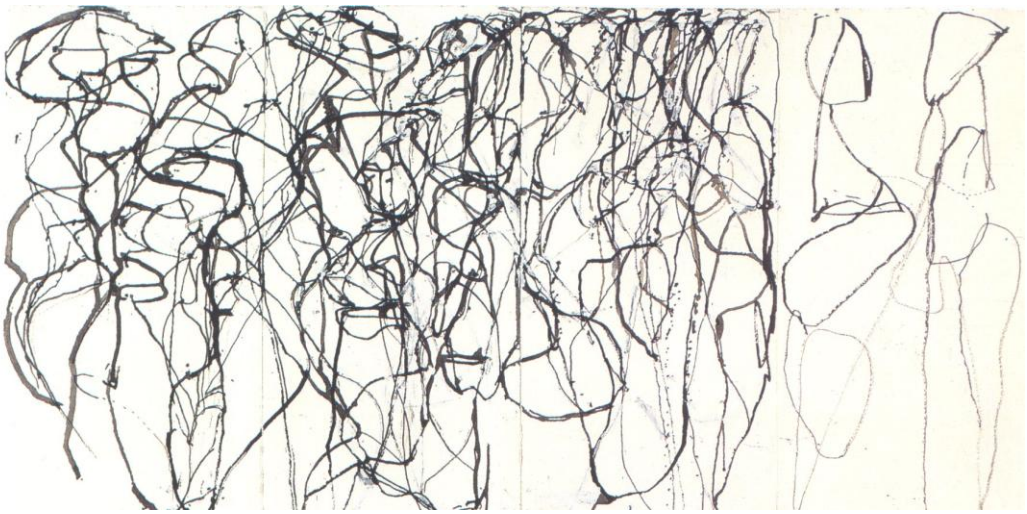

Fig 2 **Brice Marden**, *The Muses Drawing*, 1991-93, 3 sheets x 37.2 x 74.2 cm.

He cites Japanese calligraphy, Chinese poetry and nature among his sources of inspiration. Although resembling calligraphy in structure, Marden's 'glyphs' (as he refers to them) speak a language of natural motion rather than speech – like the persistent explorative growth of a vine. They recall the delicate meandering line of Botticelli's floating allegorical figures such as "The Hour" in *The Birth of Venus* (1477-78). Yet the figurative perception of his abstract lines evolves unintentionally, as an expression of all that concerns the artist in his life - his family and his environment. The ambiguity of his abstraction allows viewers a multitude of undefined interpretations, non-reliant on the intentions of the artist.

> '…To Marden his painting is not just a collection of abstract marks… it is an indeterminate spiritual narrative layered with content and meaning… Each

> viewer brings a unique autobiography to the reading of an abstract painting's indeterminate narrative, even as the painting has grown determinately out of everything the artist knows and everything the artist is.' (Bois, pp.102-3)

The work of Brice Marden contains the unexplainable essence or 'soul' which occurs when an artist achieves what Charles Baudelaire described in his definition of "pure art" in 1860 as "evocative magic".[2] (Bois, p.102). The atmospheric meanderings of Marden's glyphs share the same timeless quality as Pollock's atmospheric webs. But where Pollock's gesture records the frenetic energy of his physical action, Marden's gesture is a meditation of natural metamorphosis. 'It turns painting into meditation on the process that leads from impulse to gesture to mark…' (Ratcliff, p.304). There is a greater sense of light and space, allowing greater freedom – time for the viewer to engage. Time is an essential element for this artist, his creations, his audience, and is part of the process of contemplation.

> 'In the drawings and paintings of the *Cold Mountain* series, Marden reaches a new level of maturity, bringing together the abstract with the spiritual. The paintings and drawings are deeply beautiful, full of mystery and light.' (Lee, p.11).

Attaining a spiritual quality is not a new concept for Marden. His earlier Minimalist works were concerned with the dramatic tonal quality of deep silent colour, yet they speak of the same concerns for nature and time. They provoke contemplation in a different format.

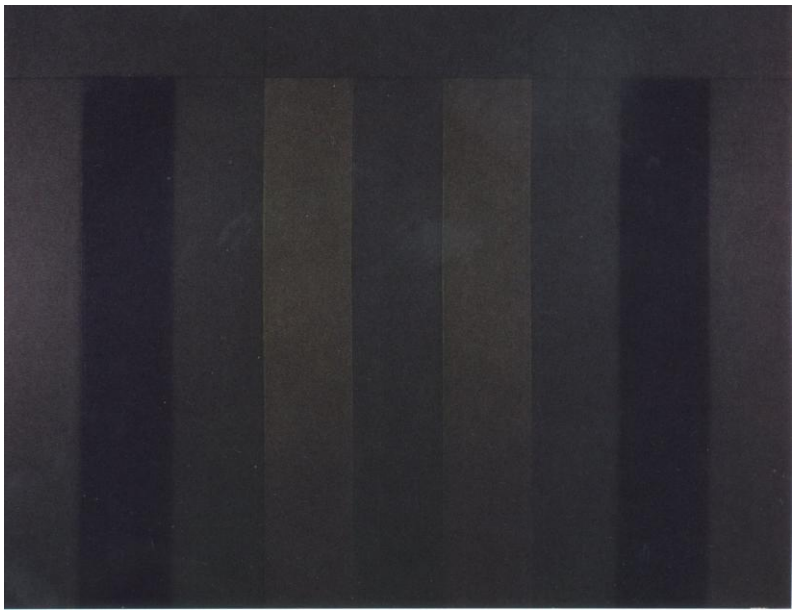

Fig 3 **Brice Marden,** *Green (Earth),* 1983-4, 213 x 277 cm

[2] - Charles Baudelaire,) - "What is pure art according to the modern idea? It is the creation of an evocative magic, containing at once the object and the subject, the world external to the artist and the artist himself…" (c. 1860 from his essay "Philosophic Art" but published posthumously) by Jonathan Mayne, *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*, Phaidon Press, London, 1964, p204..(Bois,p.102)

Robert Hughes comments in The Shock Of The New:

> 'Marden's work was certainly minimal, but not in an abolitionist way…In *Green (Earth)*, 1983-4, an array of long narrow panels is locked together in silent T formations with infills. They suggest the absolute forms of classic architecture, columns and lintels, not presented as diagrams but bathed in a curious stored-up light; their subtle colour is organic, not schematic, and speaks of nature. The surface, much-layered, suggests a history of growth, submergence, and mellowing.' (Hughes, p.389).

Minimalism evolved as a reaction against the gestural painting of Abstract Expressionism. Inspired by the 'impersonality of industrial production' (Duro & Greenhalgh, p.190) the Minimalists were concerned with formal qualities rather than meaning. In painting they adopted the hard edge style seen in Marden's work from the 80s or alternatively the unpainterly staining of colour-field painting. Yet it was the freedom from the bonds of tradition – the attention to surface and materiality - initiated by Abstract Expressionism that allowed this generation of artists to be critical and to respond. Peter Fischer summarises:

> Abstract Expressionism marked a new peak in the succession of artistic avant-garde movements, and it was presented with great confidence. There were two ways in which subsequent generations of artists could react if they did not want to go on working in that style: first, they could undermine its elitism with irony or the introduction of subjects and techniques from trivial and mass culture (Pop Art); second, they could continue the reductive process that derived from avant-garde thinking and consisted in the elimination of even the emotional and individualistic aspects of a work of art (Minimal Art). Despite their criticism, however, both schools adopted significant features of the art of Pollock and his circle. (Bois, p.17)

Despite the negative reaction to Abstract Expressionism which resulted in painting losing favour through the 1960s and 70s, artists such as Brice Marden continued to use the medium to explore their ideas. The *Cold Mountain* and *Muses* works show the return of the intuitive and expressive act of painting. Marden's participation in these two vastly differing styles, both influenced by Abstract Expressionism, is evidence that the intention of the artist to communicate an idea crosses the boundaries of art history's imposition of categories.

As already mentioned, the alternative form of Minimalism to develop from Abstract Expressionism was Colour-field painting. The artist responsible for expanding on what Pollock had arrived at was Helen Frankenthaler (b. 1928). Around 1950 after six years of drip painting, Pollock began to have doubts about where it would lead. In an attempt to push the process further he reintroduced figurative elements from earlier work resulting in black and white stain paintings on unprimed canvas. Helen Frankenthaler responded to Pollock's tentative black and white explorations, adopting the same method of working on unprimed canvas spread on the floor allowing movement around the work from all sides. But Frankenthaler was concerned with colour and achieved a new luminosity usually associated with watercolour painting in her

interpretation of the method. Her large oil stain painting, *Mountains and Sea*, 1952 utilised the atmospheric immediacy of Pollocks paintings but offered a point of departure for the next generation of Colour-field painters such as Kenneth Noland and Morris Louis. Noland acknowledged his debt to Frankenthaler stating how both he and Louis 'were interested in Pollock but could gain no lead to him. He was too personal. But Frankenthaler showed us a way – a way to think about and use colour.' (Moszynska, p.194).

Fig. 4 **Helen Frankenthaler**, *Mountains and Sea*, 1952, 220 x 297.8 cm.

The freedom implied by the concept of Abstract Expressionism should have allowed an opportunity for minority groups such as women, native Americans, Afro-Americans and other ethnic groups. But the critics were searching for a symbol of American identity that would establish America as leading the world into the modern age. Pollock provided the ideal formula - white male, American born, boy from the west – and was elevated by the critics to near-mythic status that would override any ethnic or female achievements. Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock in their book Old Mistresses : Women, Art and Ideology argue that although Frankenthaler is widely acknowledged for her contribution, even favourable critics persisted with the tradition of stereotyping and categorising her 'femaleness' rather than her artistic achievement. In the catalogue for her major retrospective at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1969, E.C.Goosen

commented:

> ‘No matter how abstract her paintings, yet they never quite lose that hereditary connection with the world of nature and its manifestations. This is in direct contrast with that kind of art which is fed only by other art and derives itself from current aesthetic theory.’ (Parker & Pollock, p.146)

As already shown, the work of Brice Marden and even the work of Pollock himself had derived influences from nature, yet for these male artists it was not considered a derogatory criticism. Women have tended to pursue intellectual and theoretical forms of artistic expression in an attempt to avoid this kind of association, and in doing so support the discrimination. The successful use of nature as inspiration by artists like Marden indicates opportunities for women now to positively promote this aspect of themselves. Goosen was wrong for implying that Frankenthaler was operating outside the contemporary art circle and its ‘current aesthetic theory’. The following statement shows that Frankenthaler was very much involved in the movement and convincing in her evaluation of where it should go.

> ‘… Frankenthaler saw that opening in Pollock’s poured imagery, which so many dismissed as a high road to a dead end. “You could become a de Kooning disciple or satellite or mirror,” she later said, “but you could *depart* from Pollock.” The dead end was in de Koonings art, Frankenthaler came to believe, but only after she proved herself his remarkably accomplished disciple…’ (Ratcliff, p.220).

Her whole involvement with Abstract Expressionism and development of the colour staining technique was avant-garde and helped to establish the change in attitude that resulted in Minimalism. Her method meant that the paint literally became part of the canvas fabric, emphasising its ‘flatness and two-dimensionality’ while creating ‘a sense of ambiguous space’ through optical effects of advancing and receding colour. ‘The paintings both conform to and undercut the notion of flatness in a way that brings the maximum number of ambiguities into play.’ (Parker & Pollock, p.146). Minimalism and Pop Art changed the way the gesture was perceived so that instead of being an expressive response played out in ritual it became a symbol of expression.

> ‘…gestural painting, originally developed and used as a stylistic method, is now hardly employed at all by artists as a formal means but only as an element of content…The gesture is no longer an indexical sign but signifies only the idea, the concept of spontaneity.’ (Bois, p.19)

Terry Winters (b. 1949) is a New York artist who utilised the extended repertoire of paint methods developed by Helen Frankenthaler and the Abstract Expressionists. His expressive paint application was recognised in the early 80s following the emergence of Neo-expressionism in Europe, which initiated renewed interest in painting in New York. Like Brice Marden his early efforts were based in Minimalism where he was concerned with the materiality of the paint using a scientific approach of depicting the chemical structure of pigments and alchemical experiments in the making paint.

Science and technology are his sources, specifically microscopic or biomorphic forms, which appear in his work throughout the 1980s. His compositions are arranged like botanical studies showing repetitive views of an object's structure. His process of layering various consistencies of paint is integral to the construction of the work where he allows a record of each layer to remain exposed on some portion of the surface, like a diagram of itself. These layers consist of drawing, staining similar to Frankenthaler's, expressive gestural paint and splatters from Pollock, the spatial qualities of colour-field painting, and linear gesture like Marden's although tending to be more impasto. He also scrapes back layers and draws into wet paint. His use of restricted colour allows the quality of paint to create surface tension. *Free Union*, 1983 shows plant-like amoeboid forms that fade in and out of focus due to his method of revealing and obscuring the imagery amongst its layers of paint, reminding us of a view through a microscope.

Fig. 5. **Terry Winters**, *Free Union*, 1983, 200.7 x 264.8 cm.

> '… Winters' interest in origins is apparent, as is his connection to early Abstract Expressionism … But in contrast to these artists, who used organic forms emblematic of virgin birth and the creation myth, Winters uses generic, diagrammatic forms, drawn from pre-existing sources … and speak as much of cultural as they do of natural phenomena …' (Phillips, pp.18-19).

Similar to Marden's *Muses,* Winters' paintings are about metamorphosis and evolution. Time is therefore an important element, once again demanding of the viewer, to contemplate the history of the image's creation. Instead of using an implement to

distance himself from the work he uses ‘process’. The resulting image is not planned but lies hidden mysteriously in the process, waiting for the artist to release it. These works are like a record of the history of paint but they are also about nature – like the primal ‘soup’ that all life has evolved from.

In a recent exhibition review of Winters’ work in “Modern Painters”, Jonathan R Jones opens the commentary by saying:

> ‘The trouble with Terry Winters’s work is that it defies definition … his work presents a healthy challenge to critics obsessed with fitting artists into isms and reminds us that artists rarely work in bite-sized ‘movements’.’

A possible advantage of painting’s diminished popularity is that there seems to be less emphasis on categorising it. Whether it is hard for critics to find a context for painting in a dynamic world of change or else it just seems futile – that painting is just painting anyway! The benefit for painters is greater freedom from pigeonholing.

Winters is commited to addressing the more difficult issues in visual expression. In recent work he attempts to represent such unrepresentable subjects as sound and music, using grids and concentric circles. They still retain a diagrammatic element and references to science and technology, but there is a shift toward ‘iconography of the built environment’ rather than the natural environment, creating a more claustrophobic yet charged effect than the open space of earlier work.

> ‘His grid is a grid gone mad, symbolising a system out of control…’ (Jones)

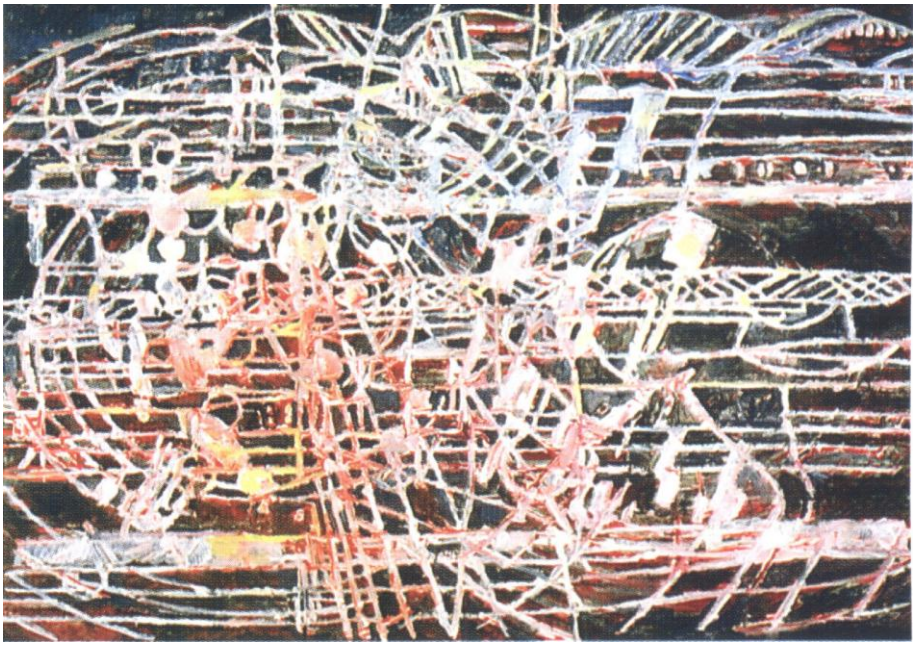

Fig.6: **Terry Winters**, *Depth Profiling*, 1999, Oil on linen, 209.9 x 295.1 cm.

Yet there remains something organic in his richly painted surfaces. The conviction he shows in his powerful expression and even the practice of grinding his own paints conjures up images of ritual, and implies a search for deeper meaning than the superficiality of modern existence. Winters' works recall the diagrammatic quality of X-ray paintings of Northern Australian aboriginals without making reference to this ancient form of art. His concern for attempting 'to make images succeed where words fail' and his 'anti-classificatory stance' at the 'absurdity of reducing artists to convenient labels' provides the work with an impressive determination somehow placing it outside the usual parameters of criticism. Jones concludes:

> 'In the case of Winters the paint begins to speak for itself and the critic comes closer to redundancy than the conceptualists could ever have hoped for.' (Jones, p.111)

Hasn't this been a significant underlying aim of visual art in the latter half of this century, or have the critics taught us to no longer think or respond for ourselves?

Australian indigenous art contains a contemplative quality and because it has not evolved within the realm of the Western tradition of art it is not scrutinised and categorised but is evaluated purely from an intuitive response. The increasing appreciation and popularity throughout the world of Australian indigenous art is evidence that there is a need for greater freedom of response to art, and likewise freedom for artists of all cultural backgrounds to not be dictated by fashions or 'isms'. Works such as *My Country*, 1995 by Emily Kame Kngwarreye demonstrate the freedom of expression and intuitive gesture, forming an intriguing web of meaning, fully known only to the artist. Yet the passion and emotion felt by the artist for the subject – her country – is translated through the telling gesture of her marks.

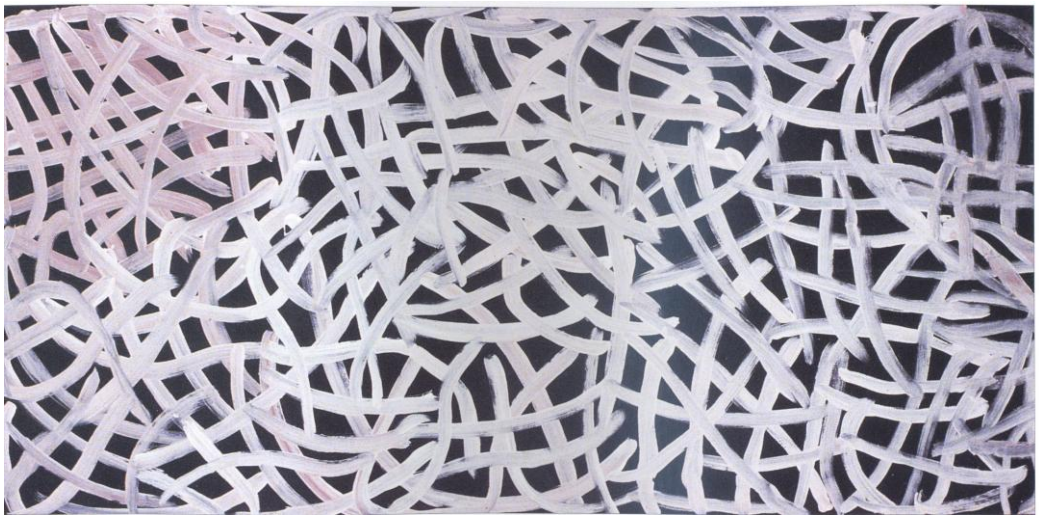

Fig 7. **Emily Kame Kngwarreye**, *My Country*, 1995, 181 x 88 cm

> "To the western viewer, the paintings of this extraordinary octogenarian artist with her exuberant colouration or minimalist stripes and absence of narration may appear as pure abstraction. Yet despite her differing styles, for Kngwarreye, her paintings were all inseparable from her subject – her country". – Susan McCulloch, 1998. (Hollows, p.3)

It is not being suggested that this artist was influenced in any way by the styles of abstraction and minimalism mentioned. This aboriginal elder has probably a closer affinity with the beliefs of Joseph Beuys that 'the artist is Shaman of society[3]' (or more appropriately in this case Shaman as artist) than to Abstract Expressionism. But there is an undeniable relationship between the power of the gesture by this artist and that of Abstract Expressionism. Unlike Abstract Expressionism, however, where the painted surface became the subject of the work replacing narrative, Emily's paintings are entirely about subject – the whole essence of her country – both physical and spiritual. Lewis Biggs in his introduction to Working With Nature – Contemporary art from Korea, in 1992 gives an overview of the Shamanist tradition:

> 'The essence of Shamanism is a respect for the entire animate and inanimate world (including the proper place of humanity within it). . . Shamanism does not place humanity at the head of a symbolic hierarchy; its philosophy of harmony, of working with the situation rather than attempting to dominate it, of only allowing ourselves the things which can be taken with respect, is an ancient wisdom and has had an urgent rebirth in the West – in which Beuys played his part – under the name of 'Ecological Studies'.' (Biggs, p.8)

Artists whose pursuit of visual communication is purposeful and consistent despite changes in trends can achieve a spiritual presence in their work, inspiring contemplation. These artists, I believe, *are* the Shamans of the modern world, even if they don't intend to be.

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Conclusion

The enormous advantage of the new technological age is the availability of information. We have more access than ever before to alternative philosophies and beliefs that we can learn from. Technology does not mean the abolition of the handmade – the essence of what it is to be human – and so art does not have to be restricted to expressions of mass production and mechanisation. The persistence of some artists to continue expressing responses to the ever-changing world on a two-dimensional surface using the medium of paint is evidence that the tradition will continue to survive and raise issues about contemporary society, human psychology and our relationship with the past. Meyer Schapiro in his essay "The Liberating Quality

[3] German artist Joseph Beuys and Korean artist Nam June Paik collaborated as part of Fluxus. 'They shared an interest in Shamanism, a belief that the artist is the Shaman of society…' (Biggs, p.8)

of Avant-Garde Art" (1957) outlines one reason painting continues its relationship to human creativity:

> '…In a number of respects, painting and sculpture today may seem to be opposed to the general trend of life. Yet, in such opposition, these arts declare their humanity and importance. Painting and sculpture, let us observe, are the last handmade, personal objects within our culture. Almost everything else is produced industrially, in mass, and through a high division of labour. Few people are fortunate enough to make something that represents themselves, that issues entirely from their hands and minds…' (Craven, p.136)

For artists interested in paint, the tactile quality of the medium with its capability of illusory manipulation and variable colour, cannot be substituted. Meyer Schapiro describes the personal connection:

> '…the mask, the stroke, the brush, the drip, the quality of the substance of the paint itself, and the surface of the canvas as a texture and field of operation – all are signs of the artist's active presence…' (Craven, p.136)

Human beings have had a long relationship with the act of painting, from primitive cave paintings, as the earliest known record of human communication and visual expression, through numerous stylistic and theoretical changes aimed at portraying the real. But the great changes of the twentieth century reached a peak with the raw energy of Abstract Expressionism. This energy continues to inform artists still interested in expression through paint and it is unlikely that the technological age will nullify this relationship. In 1955 Robert Motherwell wrote:

> Art is a form of action ... [It is] an activity of bodily gesture serving to sharpen consciousness... For this reason, the act of painting is a deep human necessity, not the production of a handmade commodity... (Craven, p.133)

In this essay I have attempted to follow the thread of pure unconscious expression in painting which will continue to provide artists with the means to communicate a deep, timeless human psychology.

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Details of Works

Fig.1: **Jackson Pollock**, *Number 1, 1950 (Lavender Mist)* 1950. Oil, enamel and aluminium on canvas 221 x 299.7 cm. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Fig.2: **Brice Marden**, *The Muses Drawing* 1991-93. Ink & Gouache on 4 Sheets of Paper, 37.2 x 74.2 cm. Musee National D'art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris.

Fig.3: **Brice Marden**, *Green (Earth)* 1983-84. Oil on canvas 213 x 277 cm. Courtesy Mary Boone Gallery, New York.

Fig.4: **Helen Frankenthaler**, *Mountains and Sea* 1952. Oil on canvas 220 x 297.8 cm. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Fig.5: **Terry Winters**, *Free Union* 1983. Oil on linen 200.7 x 264.8 cm. Collection of Suzanne and Howard Feldman.

Fig.6: **Terry Winters**, *Depth Profiling*, 1999. Oil on linen 209.9 x 295.1 cm.

Fig.7: **Emily Kame Kngwarreye**, *My Country* 1995. Acrylic on canvas 181 x 88 cm.